

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

Thomas, R. and R. Powell. 1994. *Typhlops pusillus*.

Typhlops pusillus Barbour

Typhlops pusillus Barbour, 1914:323. Type-locality, "Cape Haitien, Haiti." Holotype, Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ) 8719, an adult, sex unknown, collected by W.M. Mann in "March - November 1913" (examined by RT).

Typhlops pusilla: Thomas, 1966:264.

• **Content.** No subspecies are recognized (but see Remarks).

• **Definition.** *Typhlops pusillus* is a slender blind snake characterized by (see Thomas, 1976 and 1989, for complete explanations of characters): (1) snout rounded; (2) rostral narrow in dorsal aspect (RW/RL 0.48-0.56), clavate (mode), parallel, or oval, apex not flared, labial flare category 2; (3) preocular divided, lower portion contacting only 3rd of upper labials; (4) ocular length about 1/2 height, sinuosity 0.35-0.12; (5) rostronasal complex calyculate; (6) postoculars 2 (cycloid), rarely 3 or 1; (7) 1st parietal standard, spanning 2 scale rows or slightly fewer; (8) 2nd parietal present and equal to first, narrower, or absent; (9) TL to 226 mm; (10) TL/tail length in males 23-27, females 32-39; (11) TL/midbody diameter 27-37; (12) middorsal scales 245-332; (13) scale rows 22-22, 22-20-18 (rarely), or 20-18 with reduction (22-20 or 20-18) occurring at about midbody; (14) coloration bicolor with pale brown to dark brown dorsal pigmentation fading to an unpigmented venter over a narrow midlateral zone to completely pigmented with light areas around the mouth and vent, intermediate conditions with unpigmented midventral zones of variable extent; (15) rectal caecum absent; (16) hemipenes expanded, apical region oblique; (17) cranium tapered, width across prefrontals 80-88% of width across prootics; (18) premaxilla narrow, about 30% of width across prefrontals, concave anteriorly, not protuberant, posteroventral edges angled forward, forming an angular junction with narrow blade; (19) nasals with lateral angle, narrowly bordering narial opening; (20) septomaxilla without hook, anterior portion broad; (21) frontal-parietal suture transverse, sinuous to nearly straight; (22) frontal with anterior ventral wedgelike process distinct to nearly absent, no bladelikey process; (23) optic foramen canalicular; (24) postorbital process of parietal moderate; (25) parietal without temporal ridge; (26) lappet of prootic small to moderately developed, not reaching or reaching and overlapping or fusing with tongue, tongue extending to parietal; (27) supraoccipitals unfused, in very broad contact medially; (28) exoccipitals not fused with prootics; (29) angular not sliverlike; (30) dorsal process of quadrate hooked; (31) atlantal hypapophysis tablike to bladelikey, total hypapophyses 4-5; (32) hyoid with ceratobranchials fused anteriorly into V-shaped structure, no basihyal; (33) pelvis in males well developed and hatchet-shaped, females with rodlike ischia only.

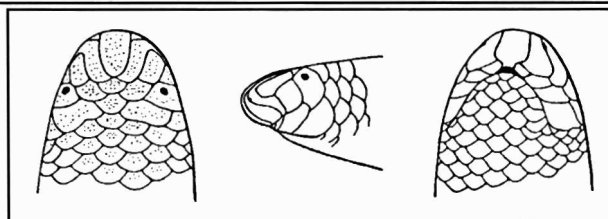


Figure. Head of *Typhlops pusillus* (from Cochran, 1941).

• **Diagnosis.** This small to moderate-sized species of *Typhlops* (TL to 226 mm) is unique among West Indian species in having a divided preocular, the lower portion contacting only the 3rd of the upper labials. The species is further distinguished by a narrow, clavate (mode) or parallel rostral scale; calyculate rostronasal complex; 20 scale rows with reduction to 18 occurring beyond midbody or not occurring; hyoid without basihyal and with ceratobranchials fused into a V-shaped structure; and a hatchet-shaped pelvis in males (females with rodlike ischia only). Coloration is bicolor, tan to dark brown; the venter is unpigmented.

• **Descriptions.** In addition to the original of Barbour (1914), Cochran (1941) and Schwartz and Henderson (1991) provided descriptions, as did Thomas (1976), who also addressed geographic variation. Richmond (1964) briefly discussed variation.

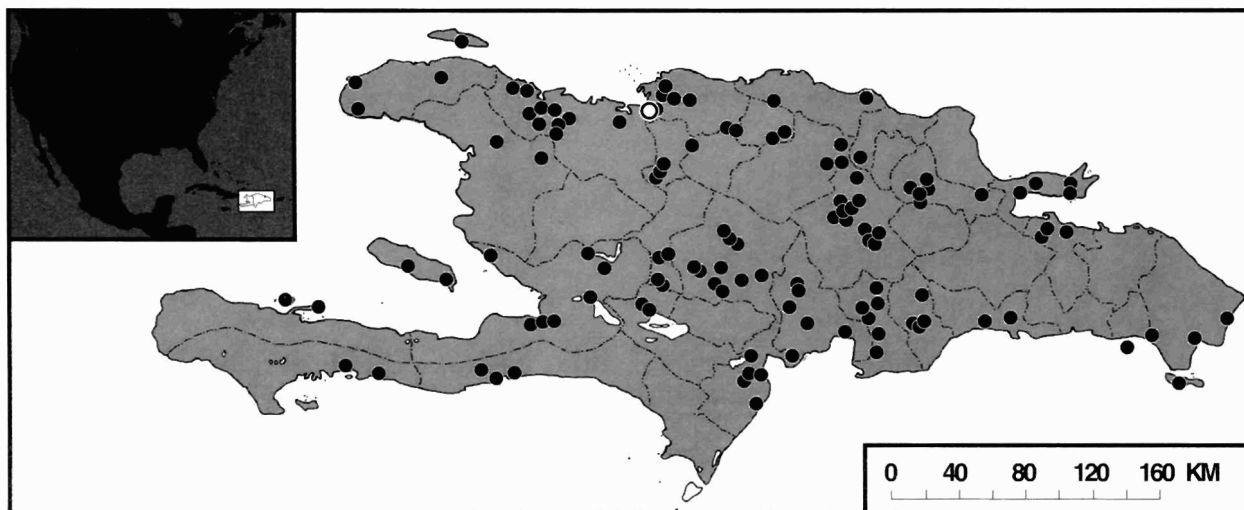
• **Illustrations.** Barbour (1914), Cochran (1941), and Thomas (1976) provided line drawings of the head, the latter also included line drawings of ventral and dorsal views of the skull. Thomas (1965) figured a flattened rostral.

• **Distribution.** This species occurs throughout much of Hispaniola, except for the Barahona Peninsula lowlands and much of the western part of the Tiburon Peninsula (west of Aquin), although it occurs on Île Grande Cayemite. *Typhlops pusillus* also occurs on Île de la Gonâve, Île de la Tortue, Isla Catalina, and Isla Saona. Elevational distribution is from sea level to about 2400 feet. This species occupies habitats ranging from very xeric to extremely moist, and is often found in very high densities (Schwartz and Henderson, 1991).

• **Fossil Record.** None.

• **Pertinent Literature.** Thomas (1974) compared *T. pusillus* with other Hispaniolan congeners. Thomas and Thomas (1978) reported on the activity response to photoperiod. Werner et al. (1978) described the histology of the intestine.

In addition to references cited elsewhere, this species was included in keys, checklists, and guides by Schmidt (1921), Cochran



Map. Distribution of *Typhlops pusillus* (modified from Schwartz and Henderson, 1991). The large circle marks the type-locality, dots indicate other records.

(1924), Barbour and Loveridge (1929), Barbour (1930, 1935, 1937), Böker (1939), Schwartz and Thomas (1975), Hahn (1980), Henderson and Schwartz (1984), Henderson et al. (1984), Schwartz and Henderson (1985, 1988), and SEA/DVS (1990, 1992).

• **Etymology.** The specific name is from the Latin *pusillus*, meaning shy.

• **Remarks.** This species is very variable geographically with eastern and western forms that differ strongly in color and scale-row reduction. Other regional variants are known, some of which may be specifically distinct (Thomas, 1976).

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Richard Thomas, Department of Biology, P.O. Box 23360, University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras, PR 00931, and **Robert Powell**, Department of Natural Sciences, Avila College, Kansas City, MO 64145.

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